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### **Statement of Director Barry R. McCaffrey Announcement of Emergency and Increased Funding Proposal for Colombia and the Andean Region**

The Administration proposal for increased funding to support Colombia and the other countries in the Andean Region is one of the most important counterdrug initiatives ever proposed by our government. Rapidly expanding cocaine and heroin production in Colombia constitute a threat to US national security and the well-being of our citizens. Eighty percent of the cocaine entering the United States either originates in or passes through Colombia. Increasing amounts of highly pure Colombian heroin are being shipped to the streets of the US as well. Drug trafficking and the violence and corruption it generates also undermine Colombian democracy and regional stability.

This proposal is a balanced, comprehensive package that will cost \$1.3 billion over two years supporting counterdrug activities, alternative economic development, rule of law, human rights, good governance, and the resettlement of internally displaced persons. The Administration has already begun consultations with members of Congress. In asking for Congressional support we are squarely placing before the legislative branch the question of US commitment to reducing drug supply and aiding democratic allies in a region where stability, democracy, and rule of law are challenged. This proposal addresses a matter of critical importance to US interests and deserves bipartisan support.

Drug production in Colombia has been increasing dramatically. In spite of an aggressive aerial eradication campaign, Colombian cultivation of coca, the raw material for cocaine, has nearly tripled since 1992. New information about the potency of Colombian coca, the time required for crop maturity, and efficiency in the cocaine conversion process indicates that Colombian potential cocaine production could be as much as two to three times higher than previous estimates. The massive increases in drug production and trafficking in Colombia will reverse gains achieved over the last four years in Peru and Bolivia, and continued expansion of drug production in Colombia will likely result in more drugs being shipped to the United States. Immediate and significant action is necessary if we are to prevent significantly greater quantities of cocaine and heroin from flowing into the United States.

The problems in Colombia affect the lives of Americans at home and abroad. Illegal drugs cost our society nearly \$110 billion dollars each year due to health costs, accidents, and lost

productivity. The US has been successful in reducing demand for cocaine by over seventy percent since its peak in 1985. If left unchecked, the rapid expansion of drug production in Colombia threatens to significantly increase the global supply of cocaine and heroin. Without effective supply reduction programs, cheap and easily-obtainable drugs can undercut the effectiveness of our successful demand reduction programs and increase the drug threat to our communities. In Colombia, narco-funded terrorists kidnap and murder US citizens, and attack and extort US companies doing business there.

The drug production problem in the Andean Region has changed dramatically over the last decade, in large part due to successful counterdrug programs in Peru and Bolivia. Until recently, most coca was grown in Peru and Bolivia, and coca base was shipped to Colombia for processing and distribution. Aggressive drug crop eradication and interdiction operations in combination with alternative economic development programs in Peru and Bolivia have reduced coca cultivation in those countries 66% and 55%, respectively, since 1995. Unfortunately, the traffickers found favorable conditions to move production into Colombia, converting it into the world's largest producer of coca. Control of Colombia's vast coca growing regions by guerrilla or paramilitary groups, another relatively recent phenomenon, has greatly handicapped Colombian President Pastrana's ability to reduce drug production or enforce Colombian national law. These new circumstances require a change in strategy, policy, and resources if we intend to protect our nation from becoming the target of dramatically increased amounts of cocaine and heroin and avert possible increases in drug addiction, violence and crime.

The immense amounts of money generated by the drug trade are also fueling violence, lawlessness, and Colombia's long internal conflict. Colombia lacks the resources to dislodge the organized terrorists and private armies that provide a safe haven for a drug-based economy. These illegal armed groups have a dominant presence in about half of Colombia's national territory and are the source of more than 90% of the human rights violations committed in Colombia. High levels of violence and insecurity are displacing large numbers of rural inhabitants and discouraging both Colombian and foreign investment, exacerbating Colombia's worst economic recession since the 1930s. Narco-financing of the guerrilla groups has produced a paradoxical situation in which the guerrillas are militarily strong and politically weak. All of these factors are hindering the Colombian government's good faith efforts to negotiate peace and bring an end to the decades of violence.

The Pastrana Government drafted a strategy, "Plan Colombia," that recognizes that solving Colombia's inter-related problems will require significant action on a variety of fronts. The plan articulates a set of far-reaching, interlocking policies designed to promote peace, strengthen democracy, combat drug trafficking, improve the human rights climate, and revive the economy. The Government of Colombia estimates that implementing Plan

Colombia will cost about \$7.5 billion over the next three years, and Colombia intends to spend \$4 billion of its own resources and international financial institution loans to execute the plan. The Pastrana Government is asking the international community to provide the remaining \$3.5 billion in bilateral foreign assistance. The Administration proposal is responsive to the requirements identified in Plan Colombia.

Timing could not be better for a major effort to support the counterdrug efforts of the governments in the Andean Region. There is strong political will in Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia to attack the drug trade, root out corruption, end violence, and establish peace and security within the framework of democracy and respect for human rights. There is also strong will in the governments of Ecuador, Venezuela, and Brazil to ensure that successful counterdrug efforts in the current drug source countries do not displace the drug trade into their nations.

While Colombia has become the center of illegal drug production in our hemisphere, the commitment of the Government of Colombia to attacking drug production and trafficking is indisputable. The Government of Colombia is now conducting a robust counterdrug effort including eradication of drug crops; lab destruction; alternative development; attacking drug mafias; and air, maritime, riverine, and land interdiction operations to seize and destroy drugs and chemicals. Hundreds of Colombian police and military personnel, judges, prosecutors, government officials, and innocent civilians have lost their lives to guerrilla, paramilitary, and drug trafficker violence. Just as we share with Colombia the threat to national security and social well-being posed by illegal drugs, we share the responsibility to act against them. It is imperative that the United States Government do its fair share to fight drug production and trafficking in Colombia and the region and support our democratic allies.

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